

Appl. No. 09/452,367
Amdt. dated July 30, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 21, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14-19, 35-37 were pending in the application at the time of examination. In this Amendment, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of dependent Claims 5 and 8. Claim 10 has been amended to incorporate the features of dependent Claims 15 and 18. Claims 5, 6, 8, 15-16, 18 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 7, 9 and Claims 17, 19 have been amended to depend from Claim 1 and Claim 10, respectively. Claim 14 has been amended to correct an obvious typographical error. Accordingly, Claims 1-4, 7, 9-12, 14, 17, 19, 35-36 remain pending in the application. All claim amendments herein are directed towards matters of form and thus are unrelated to patentability.

Applicants note that in the heading at page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner erroneously indicates that Claim 13 is rejected. For purposes of clarifying the record, Applicants note that Claim 13 was not pending in the application at the time of examination.

Drawings.

The attached three replacement sheets of drawings correct minor informalities including those noted by the Examiner at page 2 of the Office Action and generally conform to USPTO drawing guidelines. For the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Claim 2 satisfies 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 6, 16 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice thus obviating the rejection of these claims.

The Examiner states:

For claim 2, it is unclear how the shield line can be both separated from a first signal and be a part of a

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single conductor layer with the first shield line; they are mutually exclusive. (Office Action, page 2.)

The Examiner's statement is respectfully traversed. As set forth in Applicant's specification:

As those skilled in the art understand, signal lines are part of various conductor layers (often referred to as metal layers) formed above one another. These conductor layers are electrically isolated from one another by electrically insulating layers such as silicon oxide layers. Electrically conductive vias electrically connect corresponding signal lines between conductor layers. (Page 2, lines 18-25).

Further, at page 14, line 34 to page 15, line 12, Applicants' specification sets forth:

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the structure of FIG. 3 along the line IV-IV in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. In accordance with this embodiment, FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the **conductor layer M2, e.g., the metal two layer.** Accordingly, **shield lines 102, 104 and signal line 108 in FIG. 4 are part of conductor layer M2.** Referring to FIG. 4, located below (above) shield line 102, signal line 108 and shield line 104 are signal line 106M1 (106M3), shield line 102M1 (102M3) and signal line 108M1 (108M3), respectively. **Signal lines 106M1 (106M3), 108M1 (108M3) and shield line 102M1 (102M3) are part of a conductor layer M1 (M3), e.g., the metal one (three) layer.** (Emphasis added.)

Thus, one of skill in the art would understand what is being claimed in Claim 2 when read in light of the specification. Accordingly, Claim 2 satisfies 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner further states:

For claims 2 and 16, it is unclear how the first shield and second shield line are a part of a single conductor layer; having a first and second shield line is mutually exclusive of them being part of a single conductor layer. (Office Action, page 2.)

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The Examiner's second statement is fully addressed above. Further, Applicants note that Claim 2 does not recite "the first shield and second shield line are a part of a single conductor layer" as asserted by the Examiner.

For the above reason, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 35-36 are novel over Okumura (JP405343546).

Claims 6, 16 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice thus obviating the rejection of these claims.

As discussed further below, Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claims 8 and 18, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 10 are allowable.

Claims 2, 4, and 35, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

Claim 36, which depends from Claim 10, is allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 10.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1-3, 7, 10-12, 17, 35-36 are novel over Koike (6,649,997).

Claims 5-6, 15-16 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice thus obviating the rejection of these claims.

As discussed further below, Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claims 8 and 18, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 10 are allowable.

Claims 2-3, 7, and 35, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

Claims 11-12, 17, and 36, which depend from Claim 10, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 10.

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For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Allowable subject matter.

The Examiner states:

Claims 8, 9, 18 and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Office Action, page 5.)

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claims 5 and 8 and is thus allowable. Claim 10 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claims 15 and 18 and is thus allowable. Accordingly, Claims 8 and 18 have been canceled without prejudice thus obviating the objection to Claims 8 and 18. Claims 9 and 19 depend from Claims 1 and 10, respectively, and are thus allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 1 and 10.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Conclusion

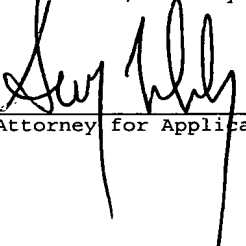
Claims 1-4, 7, 9-12, 14, 17, 19, 35-36 are pending in the application. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions relating to the above, the Examiner

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is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned Attorney
for Applicant(s).

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

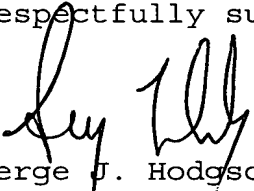
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Attorney for Applicant(s)

July 30, 2004
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,


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